

Appendix J.

Committee Letter to Political Leaders Requesting Assistance

April 15, 2005

To Whomever:

I currently serve as the Chair of the Sexually Violent Persons Transitional Facility Siting Committee, created pursuant to 2003 Wisconsin Act 187. As you may know, this committee is charged with locating at least three potential locations for a transitional facility in Milwaukee County to house individuals on supervised release under Chapter 980.

The committee's work is of the utmost importance to the community, as there are currently several pending cases of released individuals in Milwaukee County awaiting placement in the community. If no place can be found for them in Milwaukee County, our Wisconsin Supreme Court could find the entire statute unconstitutional, and more than two hundred of the worst sex offenders in the state could be released into the community without any supervision.

There has been some public discussion regarding possible amendments to Chapter 980, including abandoning Chapter 980 for alternatives such as increasing initial sentences for sex offenders. Without taking a position on those proposals, the committee wishes to make clear that consideration of such long-term proposals is clearly outside its charge pursuant to 2003 Act 187. Such proposals would not affect the people already released under the statute, the hundreds of sex offenders now institutionalized under this law, or the hundreds if not thousands of sex offenders already serving time in Wisconsin prisons under the current statutory scheme.

With these realities in mind, the committee has worked very hard over the past six months to fulfill its charge. It has become abundantly clear, however, that the committee cannot succeed in meeting this charge without your assistance. Several legislators and officials spoke at a recent public hearing, pledging help and support for the committee. As a response, at our last meeting on April 5, 2005, the committee passed a motion instructing the chair to draft a letter to local, county, and state officials requesting their assistance in these specific areas:

- First, the committee needs a full force of resources to find possible locations for the facility. The committee requires greater knowledge and expertise in finding properties in the county of Milwaukee. An earlier attempt to secure realtors to assist the committee yielded none. In addition, we require support from the State,

County and Municipal levels including but not limited to DNR experts, DOT experts, zoning experts, development/planning committee members, and building inspectors for Milwaukee County and the cities, villages and municipalities within Milwaukee County.

- Second, the committee needs more staff support to perform its tasks. While the current staff at the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) have coordinated with the chair and performed remarkably well in processing the requests of the committee, the sheer volume of requests has overwhelmed both the chair and the staff. We seek a full-time staff person devoted only to working with other staff and committee members to address the requests of the committee, the media, politicians, and the citizenry.
- Third, the committee requires your assistance in communicating with your constituents the importance of this task. It is not in the common good of the citizens of Milwaukee County to have Chapter 980 struck down. There are currently no known constitutional alternatives to Chapter 980 that would have the effect both of protecting the public and providing treatment for the sexually violent people in this state. Many children and adults have been saved from victimization by this statute. We require your assistance in explaining what is understandably a very frightening issue in a way that communicates the immediate importance of avoiding the even more frightening release of all of these individuals into our community without the supervision and treatment this law provides. We include with this letter a brochure available through the Department of Corrections entitled "Staying Safe" designed to give the best information currently available to constituents regarding how to protect their loved ones from the threat of sexual assault.

Without your help and the help of the other elected officials in Milwaukee County in securing these resources and communicating this message, the only other option is for the committee to resolve to stand inactive, issue a report documenting committee search efforts, and leave the matter of finding suitable locations for sexually violent persons to some other entity.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding your assistance to secure the resources we have requested in this letter. The Committee would very much like an initial pledge of support from your office within thirty days of the date on this letter. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this request, please feel free to contact me. I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Stan Stojkovic, Chair
Sexually Violent Persons Transitional Facility Siting Committee